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HERE AND THERE.

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"Britain reduced to the level of Switzerland—British Army made contemptible!" Such are the sensational titles of a column in the *Sunday Express* of July 9th.

The "Contemptible British Army" of 1914—and the Swiss "Armies" of Morgarten, Sempach and others—cry out. Their numbers were small, it is true, compared with those of the enemy—the British a few thousands, the Swiss a few hundreds.

But who won? The contemptible little armies did!

The "contemptible" British Army was glorious in 1914.

The "contemptible" Swiss were glorious in 1315. The Austrians lost 1,500 men, and the Swiss 16 at Morgarten. And at Sempach the Austrians lost 2,000, and the Swiss 200. The Austrians were in thousands and were trained men. The Swiss were but simple untrained mountaineers, but possessed of faith and the strongest determination. Those feelings counted for the victory. The fight was man to man. In a way it was fair and honest, even chivalrous.

The great scientific art of modern warfare was then unknown. Its big long-distance guns, its rapid machine guns, high explosives, bombs, aircraft, poisonous gases, dealing death, torture and ruin wholesale and indiscriminately, women and children included, were not within their ken, and had it been so, the mentality of the time was such that friends and enemies alike would have revolted against these unfair and inhuman means of destruction, for whatever may have been their rough education, their primitive sense was based on sound principles. The gradual development of a "higher" civilization brought with it the "higher" potentiality of power or means for evil. Paradoxically our times are still called "the Christian era!"

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The *Sunday Express* startling titles refer to a proposal at the Temporary Mixed Commission on the Reduction of Armaments set up by the League of Nations, in which the British Government is represented by Lord Esher. The limit of the Armies of Great Britain and Switzerland is put at the same figure, viz., 90,000. France would have only 180,000, Belgium 60,000, Italy 120,000.

There is no mention as to the size of the Navy. Would the British be also reduced to that of the Swiss?

This applies only to the High Seas Navy, not the air fleet. The question of the latter is now being seriously looked into by the British Government.

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If Switzerland has not hitherto required a navy, though water is not lacking there, this is mainly due to the fact that most of it is in a solid state and high up, and is surely no reason why Switzerland should not be blessed with someone possessed of the proud title of Admiral. The London Swiss Colony, many years ago, included a member, a cook, who had travelled all over the world, even in China, who was also called "l'Amiral B—" because he had "commanded" the boat travelling from Estavayer to Neuchâtel. He often told the story of his exploits. On one of Neuchâtel's market days his boat carried as usual a number of women of Estavayer and its environs going to sell their goods, when one of the paddle-wheels got loose. As the "bateau" had only one wheel going and naturally went round in a circle, the women got panic struck. The way "l'Amiral" illustrated his attitude on the occasion was very impressive and breathed of the rôle of Bompart in *Tartarin sur les Alpes*: "Du calme, du calme, mesdames! Je vous sauverai!" Needless to say that after many circuitous zig-zags "le navire toucha au port."

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After all, what would be the use of any army or navy if the Earth is to be blown up by one atum breaking up another?

Eminent authorities in physics and chemistry having been consulted on the possibility of the sudden alteration of our mode of existence, have declared that, although they do not know and cannot tell, they, however, are generally of the opinion of the *status quo ante*.

It is stated that the atom has been already *almost* exploded in the University of Chicago by inflicting on it the greatest electrical shock in history and that it has been "shaken," whatever that may mean. Oxford, Cambridge, Continental and American Universities are vying with each other for the greatest honour scientist has ever won—if the scientist remains alive to get it, and others, to confer it upon him or his memory.

Scientists quite coolly say that if the breaking of one atom will cause the breaking of another, our world will become another star. Never mind about us, the remaining portion of humanity, we can look on and be pleased with the result, for we may shine with it if we have not succeeded in doing so in this world.

Really, it appears the breaking of the atom is no simple affair. First, it costs money to do it. All experiments do. It is being asked for. Next (the most important point), it requires power to do it with, since electricity is being used. If so much labour is wanted to "do in" an atom, and as the atom would act inversely to the molecule (a law of nature), it will not act as a molecule does, say, of coal and be decomposed by heat and be recomposed with oxygen or air, viz., be oxydised, or be what we call burned, and give out a larger supply of heat than that it has received. No, the elements of atom would require for their breaking up, according to common-sense, the very element that they got separated from before they became an atom, and would, therefore, become a receiver, instead of a giver.

Where and what is that element?

Our knowledge of the existence of matter is that it is composed altogether of heat, or, if not mostly so, of gases cooled down, that is, deprived of their original heat, for we are aware that if the heat of a permanent gas is taken away—no gas remains. This is classic, and the absolute zero, forming the base of calculations for heat work. In this case, what has become of all the atoms of the gas if there be none left?

Now, as to practical work or value to be derived from the breaking of the atom, supposing it possesses the stupendous power put forward, any engineer can tell the resistances of the metals or materials in existence. Resistance is thus limited. For instance, in motor cars, the parts affected by the heat have to be cooled down, that is, heat has to be wasted in order that the metals should retain their working state, and if the power or temperature were greater, as for example in high explosives, an engine would not last long. Again, a shaft has to be a certain size for a certain power to be transmitted at a given number of revolutions. In fact, an excessive power in a limited volume or space is of no use at all for good work, except for a high explosive effect.